

monitor large areas, they are stuck monitoring the open door.

Listen, we can have arguments about immigration, but, supposedly, we all agree we should have border security—at least we used to. This doesn't make sense. But this is now the reality, and it will sit like this for we don't know how long—maybe forever—until we as a nation determine this has to change. It is an open invitation.

Have things really changed significantly on the border? Let me give you an example that is pre-COVID—pre-COVID, February of last year, before COVID came through. So don't say that things have changed in COVID. In February of 2020, we had under 40,000 people who were apprehended crossing our southern border that month—under 40,000 pre-COVID. That is a transition and an arrest process.

This February, with the only thing changing being the change of Presidents, we had over 100,000 people illegally crossing the border. One year later, we go from less than 40,000 to over 100,000.

This is a manufactured crisis that is happening on our border: a halting of closing up the holes in the fence; statements that we are going to do a moratorium, that we are not going to have anyone deported anymore; changing the rules on unaccompanied minors to basically invite them to come into the United States; and, again, statements like, "Caravans, I will just tell them to pause; we are not quite ready for you yet."

That is really not going to be a pause at all. That is going to be an invitation. That is not me saying that. It is the thousands and thousands of people who are coming to be able to connect with relatives who are already here and to be able to walk through a process, to be able to go around our visa application process and go around legal immigration.

I remind us as a country that we allow a million people a year to legally come to the United States and become citizens—a million people a year. We are not a stingy nation in engaging with legal immigration. There is a right way to do it, and we welcome people to do it the right way. This is welcoming people to do it the wrong way, and that does not help our security as a nation.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Wyoming.

BUDGET

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, I come to the floor to talk about President Biden's runaway spending proposals.

Of course, as a conservative Republican, when I look at this thing, I have to say: Wait a second. This is not something that I can support in any way.

We have a 50-50 Senate here in the United States. The Democrats have won a narrow margin in the House, but the Democrats in Washington are acting like they have won in a landslide

and have a national mandate. They do not. If there is any mandate when you have a 50-50 Senate and when you have such a narrow range in the numbers between the Republicans and the Democrats in the House, you would say it is a mandate to move to the middle. That is what the American people voted for. They said: Let's get to the middle. Let's find solutions to move our country forward.

It does seem, to me, what the Democrats are doing is an unprecedented overreach. The Democrats have only had control in Washington for about a month and a half, and it has already cost the American people \$1.9 trillion. It is an astonishingly large figure. It was supposed to be for coronavirus relief, but 1 percent of the money went for vaccines, and only 9 percent went to actually fighting the coronavirus. Yet, before they passed the bill, that is what the Democrats said it was for. It does seem to be the oldest page in the Democratic playbook.

We all remember the old ObamaCare bill and debate and discussion. They said it was a tax. When they needed votes in Congress, they said it wasn't a tax. Then they realized they were going to lose in court, and they said it was a tax all over again. Well, we have seen the same playbook here. They said we needed more coronavirus relief, and then they passed this liberal wish list. Once they had the votes, they admitted the bill was not about coronavirus medical relief, healthcare relief or vaccines or fighting the disease. No—a liberal wish list.

Now, don't just take my word for it. The Democratic majority leader, standing right there, called it a "turning point" that transforms the United States. The White House Press Secretary called it the "most progressive bill in American history." One Democratic leader in the House called it an "ideological revolution." I guess they forgot it was supposed to be about the coronavirus. It doesn't sound like coronavirus healthcare relief to me.

After the bill passed, Speaker PELOSI admitted this was the same bill that she put forward last summer. Back then, the New York Times looked at it and called it "more a messaging document than a viable piece of legislation." POLITICO called it a "Democratic wish list filled up with all the party's favorite policies."

This was never a coronavirus relief bill. They used the coronavirus to cover the payoff to all of the most powerful people in the Democratic Party: \$85 billion to union pension plans, irresponsibly run; \$26 billion for California Gavin Newsom; \$12.5 billion for New York and Governor Andrew Cuomo; a big payoff for teachers unions and potentially millions for Planned Parenthood.

President Biden signed the bill, and then he gave a speech a few hours later. In effect, he admitted the bill doesn't get us 1 day closer to reopening our country. This is what this was sup-

posed to be about—getting kids back to school, getting people back to work, and getting the virus behind us. President Biden said "there is a good chance" that small groups of people can get together outside in July. Well, he said, "that doesn't mean large events."

The Democrats spent \$1.9 trillion, and, once again, they moved the goalposts. Congress has already paid for enough vaccines for every American to get vaccinated by the end of May. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that getting vaccinated means getting your life back. This is what they told us. It means you can have indoor gatherings without masks. America needs to be fully open before the Fourth of July.

The Democrats haven't even finished their victory lap over the spending bill, and they are already telling us they want more. Here are just a few examples of what they propose to do, not with their money but with the American people's money—the taxpayers' money, the hard-earned dollars of the people who go to work every day and send their tax dollars to Washington.

In their \$1.9 trillion wish list, the Democrats tried to double the minimum wage by Federal mandate. They failed, but they are going to keep trying.

Now, of course, the Office of Management and Budget, which took a look at this thing, said: Well, if they had succeeded, it would have forced 1.4 million Americans who have jobs right now to be out of their jobs because, when you mandate a doubling of the minimum wage, small businesses are either going to have to close or lay off certain people so they can pay the wages to others in an effort to keep the doors open. It means less tax revenue overall for the country, and it means more spending for unemployment insurance. If you add it up, it would increase the national debt by about an additional \$54 billion.

In their \$1.9 trillion wish list, the Democrats also wrote a big check to the teachers unions.

Now, they actually didn't need the money because, in the five bipartisan coronavirus bills that we have passed in overwhelming majorities, we sent schools \$113 billion. The schools haven't even spent most of that money yet. In fact, they have only spent about \$16 billion of the \$113 billion. There is almost \$100 billion yet to spend. On top of that, the Democrats have just put up another \$170 billion in their wish list. If you add it up, that is nearly \$270 billion to spend with no promise—none—to reopen the schools.

The Democratic leader wants to forgive \$1 trillion in student loans. Subsidizing student loans just lets colleges raise prices. That is exactly what would happen if Leader SCHUMER's plan were to become law. Colleges don't need to raise prices. They need to lower the cost of education.

Senator SANDERS has an even more radical proposal. He wants to forgive

all Federal student loans, and that would cost \$1.6 trillion. Forgive them all. Just forgive all of the loans. It doesn't matter. Rich or poor, forgive all of the loans. Well, that would drive up the price of tuition even higher. If it allows colleges to get the money directly from the Federal Government without having to go through the students, the costs will escalate dramatically.

Let me remind my Democratic colleagues that most Americans don't have college degrees. Yet, under the Democratic plan, all taxpayers—all taxpayers—would have to pay for the college tuitions for all of the students, including those who have families who can clearly afford to pay the tuitions to the colleges which they attend. It doesn't matter. If you go to the most exclusive college or if you go to your State college, if you have a debt, we are going to get rid of it, says the Democratic proposal, and the hard-working taxpayers of America are going to be stuck with the bill. Count me out on that one.

The Democrats want to take tax dollars from people who don't have college degrees or who never went to college and give it to the leftwing professors at so many universities, and this is wrong.

President Biden also wants to double down on ObamaCare. He thinks ObamaCare didn't go far enough. According to one estimate, President Biden's healthcare plan would cost about an additional \$2.25 trillion. These are astronomically large figures. His housing plan would cost \$640 billion. The Democrats have proposed another \$2 trillion in infrastructure spending. One Democratic Senator even called for doubling that amount—\$4 trillion in new infrastructure spending.

This is just the tip of the iceberg. I could go on and on. If you add up all of the new spending proposals by the Democrats and the White House and the Senate, it could cost nearly \$12 trillion. By the end of this year, the national debt is going to be bigger than our economy, and we have the biggest economy in the world. Even before the Democrats passed their wish list, we were on track this year to have the second biggest deficit since World War II.

When the Democrats increase spending, we know what is next—massive tax increases on the American public. We heard it yesterday in the news. It was in the headlines. That is President Biden's plan—the first major tax increase in 28 years. He is proposing the biggest tax increase since 1993. He wants to raise taxes on businesses and on families, and he even wants to resurrect the death tax. Let me remind President Biden what happened after 1993. A year later, the Republicans took back the House and took back the Senate.

The 2020 elections were close. The American people didn't vote for this radical agenda, and it is a radical agen-

da. They didn't vote for \$12 trillion in new spending and new taxes with increased tax rates and increased taxes on long-term investments like your home and increased taxes like the death tax—oh—and more money for the IRS so it can send agents to investigate the American public even further.

I would urge the Biden administration and my Democratic colleagues to listen to the people and to the people from whom I hear every weekend in Wyoming. It is time to put down the credit card. It is time to stop the spending spree. It is time to move to the middle to solve problems—that would be best for our Nation if we would address them—for the people of this great Nation.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. GRASSLEY. Mr. President, we welcome about a million immigrants every year. We welcome them because they come here, abiding by our laws, and we need immigrants. We have been a welcoming country for a long time, but I come to the floor to speak about the ongoing crisis at our southern border—a crisis that, I think, this administration doesn't want to admit is a crisis. Because of some changes in policy, we have that crisis, and that crisis is people entering our country in violation of our laws.

Since taking office, this administration has advanced policies that have undermined immigration enforcement. These policies undermine efforts to secure our southern border, and they encourage illegal immigration into our country. President Biden has signaled that, when it comes to immigration that violates our laws, the United States is open for business. Speaker PELOSI and House Democrats are doubling down on that position this very week. They are working to pass several mass amnesty bills that contain no provisions related to securing the border.

It turns out that people are finally paying attention. U.S. Customs and Border Protection recently confirmed that it had encountered over 100,000 migrants attempting to cross the southern border in February—the first full month of this new administration. That is the highest total for the month of February since 2006. News reports are that Democrats are blaming Trump's policies for this situation that we are in. Yet the number of single adults encountered at the southern border was up 175 percent compared to last February. The number of family units was up 170 percent, and the num-

ber of unaccompanied alien children was up 171 percent.

The Department of Health and Human Services, which is responsible for the care of the unaccompanied children after they arrive in the United States, had 7,300 unaccompanied children referrals in February. That is the highest number of February referrals in the history of the program.

As of late last week, Health and Human Services had over 8,500 unaccompanied children in its facilities.

As of this past weekend, more than 4,200 were being held by the Customs and Border Patrol holding facilities, with nearly 3,000 being held past the legal limit of 72 hours.

These are the “kids in cages,” whom many of our Democratic colleagues were so outraged about a few years ago, blaming Trump, even though the so-called cages were created in the Obama administration, just being reused again.

Curiously, we are not seeing nearly as much outrage now as we saw during the Trump episode. Where is our fair and balanced press today?

Reports emerged late last week that one Border Patrol facility in Texas was operating at 729 percent of pandemic capacity. Many minors who had been in custody for over 5 days were reportedly able to shower only once.

If this were happening during the Trump administration, our Democratic colleagues would be expressing their anger and their outrage on any media outlet that they could find. But because this crisis is happening as a result of President Biden's policies, we have mostly silence.

President Biden's border crisis reaches beyond just these staggering numbers that I have given you. First, it is a humanitarian tragedy—a crisis. The Biden administration's policies have incentivized unaccompanied children and family units to make an incredibly dangerous trip to our southern borders.

On March 10, Reuters reported that the Mexican Government is worried that the Biden administration's asylum policies “are stoking illegal immigration and creating business for organized crime”—from the Mexican Government, reported by Reuters.

There is no doubt that cartels are profiting greatly from this trafficking. One Mexican official was quoted as saying: “Migrants have become a commodity.”

The article went on to discuss how gangs are “diversifying methods of smuggling” and how smugglers are advising migrants on how to more easily apply for asylum in the United States, including by bringing children.

It also described how higher concentrations of migrants in areas near the U.S.-Mexican border have encouraged gangs to recruit some migrants as drug mules and to kidnap other migrants. For what? For money. This is a tragedy, and it is a tragedy created in just recent weeks by changes of policies at the border by this new administration.